



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS  
WASHINGTON, DC 20420

# DIVERSITY@WORK

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VOLUME 2, ISSUE 3

MARCH/APRIL 2003

## Q&A

## Building a Diverse Workforce

*Part 2 of our interview with Dr. Robert Roswell, VA Under Secretary for Health. Dr. Roswell talked with us previously about the importance of a diverse health-care workforce and how VHA is incorporating diversity in critical hiring issues. In this issue, he offers advice for rising leaders and discusses managers' responsibilities.*



**Q: What advice do you have for women and minorities interested in leadership positions at VA?**

**Dr. Roswell:** VA is the place to be right now for health careers; there's no better place for cutting-edge care, quality outcomes, and technology. There are several things you can do to help prepare yourself for leadership positions. One is to ask questions and learn as much as you can about your specialty area. Another is to seek guidance; realize that you can benefit from your manager's and other leaders' experiences. It's also

important—especially for women and minorities—to have mentors. And potential leaders should explore the numerous career development opportunities available at VA. Equally important is risk-taking. By that, I mean taking on new projects, considering new positions—basically moving

out of your comfort zone.

**Secretary Principi has said that managers will be responsible for VA's diversity goals. Is there a plan in place for this at VHA?**

**Dr. Roswell:** We're enlightening management on the positive effects of promoting workforce diversity through our succession planning and targeted recruitment efforts. Our philosophy is to move forward as policies allow us in order to best serve our customers. The bottom line is that diversity serves vets well and enables our facilities to offer high-quality patient care.■

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## CELEBRATE!

### National Women's History Month

VA proudly joins the Nation in celebrating National Women's History Month in March. This year's theme is "Women Pioneering the Future."

In 1981, the U.S. Congress passed a resolution establishing National Women's History Week. It was chosen to coincide with International Women's Day, March 8. In 1987, Congress expanded the week to a month, and it has issued an annual

resolution for National Women's History Month ever since.

The month-long observance is an opportunity to recognize and celebrate women's accomplishments. It's also a time to support full equality for women throughout the world.

For information on the Women's Program, contact National Program Manager Lenore Jacobs at (202) 501-2193.■

### Bookmarks

- **National Women's Hall of Fame**  
[www.greatwomen.org](http://www.greatwomen.org)
- **Asiaco** <http://search.asiaco.com>
- **Hero Street USA**  
[www.neta.com/~1stbooks/hero.htm](http://www.neta.com/~1stbooks/hero.htm)
- **Twelve Months of Disability Awareness**  
[www.amsa.org/adv/cod/12mo.cfm](http://www.amsa.org/adv/cod/12mo.cfm)
- **20th Century Warriors**  
[www.history.navy.mil/faqs/faq61-1.htm](http://www.history.navy.mil/faqs/faq61-1.htm)
- **This Week in Black History** [www.seditionists.org/black/thisweek.html](http://www.seditionists.org/black/thisweek.html)



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- Hispanic Business
- HR Executive Magazine
- Indian Country Today
- Newsweek
- Pew Hispanic Center
- SHRM
- The Access Board
- USAToday.com
- Washingtonpost.com
- Workforce magazine
- Workindex.com

## FIELD NOTES

### News You Can Use

#### 17th Annual Winter Sports Clinic

The National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic, sponsored by VA and the Disabled American Veterans, takes place in Aspen, Colorado, during March 31 through April 5 this year.

Approximately 350 disabled veterans are expected to participate in this rehabilitation program open to all U.S. military vets who are treated at VA facilities for spinal cord injuries or disease, neurological conditions, orthopedic amputations, visual impairments, and other disabilities. The event is hosted by the Grand Junction, Colorado, VA Medical Center and VA's Rocky Mountain Network.

► More info: [www.va.gov/vetevent/wsc/2003](http://www.va.gov/vetevent/wsc/2003).

#### Project Connect

The Office of DM&EEO, in collaboration with Sprint and the CTIA Wireless Foundation, is sponsoring a VA-wide "Project Connect" phone drive beginning March 18. Collected cell phones are recycled and resold, with proceeds benefiting Easter Seals and the National Organization on Disability.

► More info: Contact Noemí Pizarro-Hyman, (202) 501-2031.

#### Workforce Analysis Tools Online

The Office of Diversity Management and Equal Employment Opportunity has prepared on-line data reports that pull together information necessary to predict recruitment needs and prepare current staff for promotions. The workforce reports are designed to enable analysis at the occupation level and are for use by EEO specialists, personnel specialists, and managers. Check out the VSSC tools at <http://vssc.med.va.gov>. If you can't enter the VSSC site or you get a password request, ask IT staff to configure your PC.

► More info: Visit [www.va.gov/dmeeo/publications.htm](http://www.va.gov/dmeeo/publications.htm) and select "A Guide to Conducting Workforce Analysis."

#### Annual Reports Update '03

DM&EEO issued an Annual Reporting Requirements Memorandum on February 10, 2003, regarding 12 diversity reports required by OPM, EEOC, and White House Initiative Offices; report due dates; and DM&EEO contacts. Administrations and staff offices will find the memo and subsequent guidance for each of the reports, as available, on the DM&EEO Web site, [www.va.gov/dmeeo/annualreports.htm](http://www.va.gov/dmeeo/annualreports.htm).



#### For More Info

For special observance theme information and diversity-related events, visit our Web site and select the *Calendar* link.

## WEB SITE SPOTLIGHT

### The National Women's History Project

[www.nwhp.org](http://www.nwhp.org)

The National Women's History Project is an educational, nonprofit organization offering resources to recognize and celebrate the diverse and historic accomplishments of women by providing information and educational materials and programs. According to the site, it doesn't rewrite history, but it does "make very different judgments about what is important to be remembered and who the significant players were."

**Content:** The site focuses on Women's History Month, International Women's Day, Women's Equality Day, and the Women's Heritage Campaign.

**Must-see feature:** The Learning Place, which offers biographies, state listings of costumed performers for women's observances, a teachers' lounge, and more.

**Contact info:** Provided for general e-mail gateway, phone, and fax.

**Accessibility:** No information offered.

## SPECIAL EMPHASIS

### Laws Prohibiting Employment Discrimination

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Here's an overview of laws that protect workers from job discrimination—excerpted from the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's "Federal Laws Prohibiting Job Discrimination: Questions and Answers."

\* **Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964** (Title VII) prohibits employment discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin.

\* The **Equal Pay Act of 1963** (EPA) protects men and women who perform substantially equal work in the same establishment from sex-based wage discrimination.

\* The **Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967** (ADEA) protects individuals who are 40 years of age or older.

\* **Title I and Title V of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990** (ADA) prohibit job discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities in the private sector and state and local governments.

\* **Sections 501 and 505 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973** prohibit discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities who work in the Federal government.

\* The **Civil Rights Act of 1991** provides, among other things, monetary damages in cases of intentional employment discrimination.

The EEOC enforces all of these laws and provides oversight and coordination of all Federal equal employment opportunity regulations, practices, and policies.

Other Federal laws, not enforced by EEOC, also prohibit discrimination and reprisal against Federal employees and applicants. The **Civil Service Reform Act of 1978** (CSRA), for example, is enforced by the Office of Special Counsel and the Merit Systems Protection Board. It prohibits any employee who has authority to take certain personnel actions from discriminating for or against employees or employment applicants on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, or disability. It also provides that certain personnel actions cannot be based on such attributes as marital status and political affiliation. The Office of Personnel Management has interpreted this to include discrimination based on sexual orientation. The CSRA also prohibits reprisal against Federal employees or applicants for whistle-blowing, or for exercising an appeal, complaint, or grievance right.

► More info:

[www.eeoc.gov/facts/qanda.html](http://www.eeoc.gov/facts/qanda.html)

[www.osc.gov](http://www.osc.gov)

[www.mspb.gov](http://www.mspb.gov)

[www.opm.gov/er/address2/guide01.htm](http://www.opm.gov/er/address2/guide01.htm).■

## INSIDE STORY

### Fiscal Year 2002 Workforce Change Update

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VA employed 202,005 part- and full-time employees at the end of September 2002. That's a decline of 990 workers from September 2001.

According to the FY02 Affirmative Employment Program Accomplishment Report, only two groups were underrepresented in total numbers in FY02: White women (245 net loss) and Hispanic women (97 net gain). However, many occupations have underrepresentation in one or more groups, in some cases by substantial amounts. For example, it would take the following numbers to reach parity with the Relevant Civilian Labor Force:

- 110 Black Social Workers
- 140 Hispanic Veterans Claims Examiners
- 7,000 White women Nurses

- 220 Asian American/Pacific Islanders in General Health Science
- 20 American Indian/Alaskan Native Nursing Assistants.

There was virtually no change in the total occupational underrepresentation by group during FY02, despite a turnover of more than 15,000 positions. This suggests that VA is doing well hiring groups already present in its occupations, but is making only marginal progress in bringing groups into specific occupations where they're underrepresented. VA will be tracking this progress in the FY 2004-2008 Strategic Plan in Diversity Item E-1.

*Next issue: More 2002 Workforce Change results.■*

## ***Diversity@Work***

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Management & Equal  
Employment Opportunity.  
To subscribe or unsubscribe,  
send an e-mail request to  
[dmeeo@mail.va.gov](mailto:dmeeo@mail.va.gov).

### **CONTACT US**

#### **Mail:**

Department of Veterans Affairs  
Office of DM&EEO (06)  
810 Vermont Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20420

#### **Phone:**

(202) 501-1970

#### **Fax:**

(202) 501-2145

#### **E-mail the Editor:**

[dmeeo@mail.va.gov](mailto:dmeeo@mail.va.gov)  
Visit our Web site for  
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### **COMING SOON**

- ▶ Q&A With VA's  
Director of the  
Center for Women  
Veterans
- ▶ National Asian  
Pacific American  
Heritage Month
- ▶ VA Workforce  
Change Results,  
part 2
- ▶ Web Site Spotlight
- ▶ More news, tools,  
and views!

## **DM&EEO ONLINE**

The mission of the Office of DM&EEO is to provide leadership in creating and sustaining a diverse workforce free of discrimination at the Department of Veterans Affairs. Here's a sampling of new online content

that can help *you* promote workplace diversity and enhance the employment of women, minorities, veterans, and people with disabilities:

- ▶ Asian Pacific American Heritage Month page
- ▶ The Basics of Disability Etiquette
- ▶ Diversity News broadcast info

Bookmark our site; we're here to serve you.



## **2003 DIVERSITY CALENDAR**

### **National Women's History Month** March

"Women Pioneering the Future"  
[www.nwhp.org](http://www.nwhp.org)

### **The Summit on Leading Diversity**

March 24-27  
Atlanta, GA  
(781) 862-4030  
[www.linkageinc.com/conferences/hr/leading\\_diversity/default.shtml](http://www.linkageinc.com/conferences/hr/leading_diversity/default.shtml)

### **Federal Bar Association's Indian Law Conference**

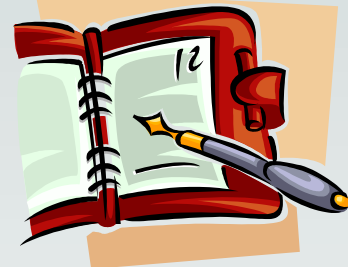
April 3-4  
Albuquerque, NM  
(202) 785-1614

### **African Americans in the Korean War Conference**

April 16-19  
Baltimore, MD  
[www.army.mil/cmh-pg/reference/korea/morganstate/conf.htm](http://www.army.mil/cmh-pg/reference/korea/morganstate/conf.htm)

### **HireDiversity.com Career Expo**

April 29  
Los Angeles, CA  
[www.hirediversity.com/diversityexpo](http://www.hirediversity.com/diversityexpo)



### **LOOKING AHEAD:**

### **National Asian Pacific American Heritage Month**

May  
Theme: "Salute to Liberty"  
[www.infoplease.com/spot/asianhistory1.html](http://www.infoplease.com/spot/asianhistory1.html)

### **FAPAC Congressional Seminar & National Leadership Training**

May 12-16  
Arlington, VA  
[www.fapac.org](http://www.fapac.org)

### **Armed Forces Day**

May 18

### **Memorial Day**

May 26 (observed)  
[www.usmemorialday.org](http://www.usmemorialday.org)